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Coach Taylor fired after allegations

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A teacher and assistant football coach was fired last week after allegations of a non-sexual assault on two students.

Gym teacher and assistant football coach Harry Taylor was fired last week after an anonymous allegation that an assault had taken place at Duxbury High School.

Superintendent of schools Dr. Benedict Tantillo sent a message to parents and students last week regarding the incident. "An investigation by the administration and an appropriate state agency has supported this allegation along with findings of severe verbal abuse," Tantillo said in the message. "Due to the findings of these allegations an appropriate response was issued, which was termination." Tantillo also said that due to the legal nature of the situation, he was not able to divulge more information. "The public should know that any decision of this type is

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done after consulting with legal counsel and much thought for all involved in the incident," Tantillo said.

Word of Taylor's termination spread quickly. Maggie Connelly, DHS senior, started a petition at noon on Wednesday, asking for Taylor to be rehired.

"He was someone that we students could seek out if we needed someone to talk to within the school, and is the epitome of somebody that you want working within the school system," she said.

By noon on Thursday, the petition had gathered 1,000 signatures. As of press time, there were 1,792 supporters for the online petition. Many supporters left comments and tweeted the link out to their followers with the hashtag #FreeT. A white sheet with "#FreeT" spray painted on it hung on a Route 3 overpass on Friday afternoon before the football game. Connelly said the word about Taylor's termination spread throughout the school after members of the football team were informed. "With that brought incessant tweeting and retweeting among the students," she said. "It spread like wildfire." Connelly said she hopes to get in touch with Superintendent of Schools Dr. Benedict Tantillo in order to discuss the petition. "The atmosphere is hopeful towards [Harry Taylor] being rehired," Connelly said. "I have nothing but respect for [Dr. Tantillo's] decision, and am not trying to undermine it in anyway possible, I just would like a chance to understand his reasoning behind it." DHS graduate Maddy Clark, started a GoFundMe account for Taylor.

"The funds raised will be given directly to the Taylor family," Clark said on the page. "We have the chance to make a real difference in the community and support one of the most widely loved teacher/ coaches in the Duxbury Public School System."

As of press time, the page had raised \$2,850 of its \$5,000 goal. Duxbury football head coach Dave Maimaron declined to comment on the incident. The School Committee declined to comment further than the message Tantillo previously sent out.

Calls to Taylor were not immediately returned.

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